

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8492
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA J
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU

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E.O.1652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, PFOR, ASEAN, ETR, MY
SUBJECT: ASEAN: PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN TERMS SUMMIT "SUCCESS"

1. MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATUK HUSSEIN ONN TOLD REPORTERS AT AN EVENING PRESS CONFERENCE AUG. 8 THAT DESPITE LACK OF "SPECTACULAR ACHIEVEMENTS" THE ASEAN SUMMIT WAS A SUCCESS. "ASEAN HAS EMERGED MORE UNITED AND DETERMINED TO SHAPE HIS OWN FUTURE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ITS PEOPLES." HE STATED. THE PRIME MINISTER EXPLAINED THAT ASEAN REACHES AGREEMENT BY CONSENSUS, CONSIDERING AND TRYING TO UNDERSTAND EACH MEMBER'S PROBLEMS. "WE WOULD PREFER TO ARGUE AND THRASH OUT EVERYTHING IN DETAIL AND PERHAPS TAKE MORE TIME, RATHER THAN INTRODUCE SOMETHING QUICKLY AND REGRET IT LATER," HE ADDED. SPECIFICALLY,

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ANY ASEAN ECONOMIC SCHEME MUST NOT ONLY BE CONSIDERED WITHIN THE ASEAN CONTEXT BUT ALSO WITH PROPER REGARD TO ITS IMPACT ON EACH MEMBER'S NATIONAL ECONOMY, THE PM CONTENDED, REFERRING TO DISAPPOINTMENT "IN CERTAIN QUARTERS" THAT THE ASEAN PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENT WAS NOT BROADENED TO 1,700 ITEMS AS SOME ADVOCATED.

2. THE PM'S COMMENTS APPEAR TO BE THE GOM'S EXPLANATION FOR SIDING WITH INDONESIA IN NOT MOVING AS RAPIDLY AS THAILAND., THE PHILIPPINES AND PARTICULARLY SINGAPORE WANTED IN EXPANDING THE ASEAN PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENT. IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A COMPROMISE WITH THE OTHER ON THIS ISSUE THE GOM MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY ANNOUNCED ON AUGUST 9 THAT MALAYSIA WOULD PROPOSE AN ADDITIONAL 40 TO 50 ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE AGREEMENT DURING THE ASEAN ECONOMIC MINISTERS MEETING IN THAILAND SEPT. 2-4.

3. COMMENT: WHILE GOM'S MOVE TO EXPAND THE PREFERENTIAL TRADING AGREEMENT BY A FEW ITEMS MAY BE VIEWED AS ONLY A TOKEN STEP IT DOES ILLUSTRATE THE FACT THAT IT WANTS TO APPEAR FORTHCOMING TO OTHER ASEAN MEMBERS AFTER SIDING WITH INDONESIA IN REJECTING THE SINGAPORE-INSPIRED LIST OF OVER 1,700 PROJECTS. THE MOVE ALSO ILLUSTRATES THAT THE GOM IS SERIOUS WHEN ITS SAYS THAT IT WOULD RATHER MOVE SLOWLY THAN JUST PLUNGE INTO SOMETHING WITHOUT STUDYING THE POSSIBLE RAMIFICATIONS.

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Message Attributes

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